

COUNCIL

Wednesday, 23rd February, 2022

Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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Present:	Mayor - Councillor Kenneth Owen (Chair)		
Councillors:	Gillian Burnett	Dave Jones	John Tagg
	Silvia Burgess	Tony Kearon	June Walklate
	Jennifer Cooper	Helena Maxfield	Paul Waring
	John Cooper	Paul Northcott	Simon White
	Julie Cooper	Barry Panter	Ian Wilkes
	Sylvia Dymond	Andrew Parker	Gillian Williams
	Andrew Fear	Sarah Pickup	John Williams
	Andrew Fox-Hewitt	Marion Reddish	Ruth Wright
	Allison Gardner	Elizabeth Shenton	Gary White
	Mark Holland	Mike Stubbs	Jill Waring
	Graham Hutton	Stephen Sweeney	David Grocott
	Trevor Johnson	Simon Tagg	
Apologies:	Councillor(s) Gill Heesom, Annabel Lawley, Mark Olszewski, Bert Proctor, Kyle Robinson and Amelia Rout		
Officers:	David Adams	Executive Director Operational Services	
	Geoff Durham	Mayor's Secretary / Member Support Officer	
	Martin Hamilton	Chief Executive	
	Simon McEneny	Executive Director - Commercial Development & Economic Growth	
	Daniel Dickinson	Head of Legal & Governance /Monitoring Officer	
	Sarah Wilkes	Head of Finance / S151 Officer	
	Craig Turner	Finance Manager	

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

2. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor's Charity Ball would be held on Friday 25 March, 2022 at Keele Hall.

3. **WALLEYS' QUARRY UPDATE**

Council - 23/02/22

The Leader, Councillor Simon Tagg introduced a report updating Members on the latest position regarding Walley's Quarry.

Problems of illegal dumping had been reported by the local MP and there were still failings at the site. The Cabinet asked the Council to make an official complaint to the Environment Agency and follow it through to the Parliament and Health Service Ombudsman if necessary.

The Head of the Environment Agency, Sir James Bevan had been written to but the Council had not received any reply. A meeting had also been requested with DEFRA.

Reference was made to paragraph 4.6 of the report and it was asked that, once details of the findings were released by the Environment Agency, that Members be informed.

Resolved: That the contents of the report be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

4. REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS AND STRATEGIES 2022/23

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Simon Tagg introduced the report and moved the recommendations which set out the recommendations of Cabinet for Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2022/23.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27, the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy, Capital Strategy for 2022/32, Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23 and Investment Strategy 2022/23 were also recommended for approval.

An amendment to the budget was tabled but was defeated.

Following a debate on the substantive motion, a named vote was taken in respect of the proposed budget:

BURGESS	N	JONES	N	SHENTON	N
BURNETT	Y	KEARON	N	STUBBS	N
COOPER. Jenny	Y	LAWLEY	Absent	SWEENEY	Y
COOPER John	Y	MAXFIELD	Y	TAGG J	Y
COOPER Julie	Y	MOFFAT	Absent	TAGG S	Y
DYMOND	N	NORTHCOTT	Y	WALKLATE	Y
FEAR	Y	OLSZEWSKI	Absent	WARING J	Y
FOX-HEWITT	N	OWEN	Y	WARING P	Y
GARDNER	N	PANTER	Y	WHITE G	Y

GROCOTT	N	PARKER	Y	WHITE S	Y
HEESOM	Absent	PICKUP	N	WILKES	Y
HOLLAND	Y	PROCTOR	Absent	WILLIAMS G	N
HUCKFIELD	Y	REDDISH	Y	WILLIAMS J	N
HUTTON	Y	ROBINSON	Absent	WRIGHT	N
JOHNSON T	Y	ROUT	Absent		

In Favour (Y)- 24

Against (N)- 13

Abstain – 0

Resolved: That recommendations a to o, as set out in Appendix 'A' of the agenda report be approved.

[Watch the debate here](#)

5. PUBLICATION OF A PAY POLICY STATEMENT FOR 2022/23

The Leader introduced a report seeking Council's approval of the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23.

This was an annual requirement of the Localism Act, 2011 setting out the remuneration of chief officers and the lowest paid employees and the changes in roles and titles of senior officers.

Resolved: That the Pay Policy Statement, as attached at Appendix A to the report, be approved.

[Watch the debate here](#)

6. APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth introduced a report which set out proposals for appointing the external auditor to the Council for the Statement of Accounts for five years from the year 2023/24.

All Authorities within the County were going in the direction of joining the National Auditor Appointment Scheme.

Resolved: That the Public Sector Audit Appointment's invitation, to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years, from 1 April, 2023, be accepted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

7. NOTIFICATION OF URGENT DECISIONS TAKEN - POLITICAL BALANCE

The Leader introduced a report notifying Members of decisions taken by the Chief Executive under urgency powers.

Following changes to political proportionality there was a need to review committee seat allocations.

Resolved: That the decisions taken be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

8. STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

A report was submitted which provided an update to Members on the activities and decisions of the Cabinet, together with the Forward Plan.

In respect of paragraph 2, a question was asked as to what percentage of social housing there would be on the Ryecroft site. The Leader stated that the percentage was a matter for the Planning system.

A question was asked on paragraph 3 regarding the markets, what would be done to help them under the Town Deal Funding. Councillor Sweeney stated that the markets occupancy were quite encouraging and the Council was working to encourage traders to open more on Sundays. There were many new stalls coming into the town including the artisan market, antiques, record fayre. Evening markets were also now taking place.

A further question was asked on paragraph 3 as to who collected the monies and took the bookings for the stalls on the Tuesday and Thursday markets. Also, how much did the BID contribute to the markets and other activities in the town centre. The Leader advised that the antiques market was run by the Antiques Forum and the artisan market, run by the Artisan Forum. The BID had invested in the market so that there could be extra stalls by the Guildhall.

The Portfolio Holder was asked to send thanks to everyone who worked so hard, behind the scenes in bringing the Borough the award winning market.

Regarding paragraph 5, it was stated that a Borough Local Plan needed to be in place as soon as possible.

The Mayor asked that it be moved to extend the guillotine for the meeting and to aim to have all business completed by 10.30pm. This was agreed.

A question was asked on paragraph 6, if the Leader would welcome an agenda item at Kidsgrove Town Council tomorrow that looked to £55,000 capital infusion with a possible £40,000 over the next four years. The Leader stated that it would be great news if Kidsgrove Town Council were to put money into this.

Members welcomed the improvements to the Westlands Sports Centre and Wolstanton Park Tennis Courts.

Regarding Paragraph 8, it was stated that a train station there would be good for the people who worked there.

It was asked whether this site could be added to the Local Plan as part of land earmarked for redevelopment. The Leader confirmed that this site was in the Local Plan as an employment site.

A statement was made on paragraph 9, that when the Council looked into introducing LED lighting that close attention was given to the health, social and environmental impacts of them and expertise be pulled in from Keele University. The Leader stated that Newcastle could learn from the County Council's experience of this and through the feasibility study, tap into Keele's knowledge.

Paragraph 10, regarding Urban Tree Planting, Members felt that this was an excellent strategy. A question was asked about future maintenance of the trees. The Leader stated that, maintenance for newly planted trees would begin in ten to fifteen years and plans were in place. In addition, grass growing around trees did not require cutting so often and therefore, parks maintenance would move to more of a tree management programme. A paper on this would be taken to an upcoming meeting of the Economy, Environment and Place Scrutiny Committee.

Members welcomed the recognition for Bereavement Service and Street Cleaning Service. Officers and staff were thanked by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling for their hard work and making this possible.

Regarding Paragraph 12, Members were pleased that the Borough Museum was now reopened following the extension and renovations. The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage was asked how many people had visited the Arthur Berry exhibition. The exhibition had opened on 15 January and 3,500 people had visited over the five week period.

Resolved: That the Statement of the Leader of the Council be received and noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

9. REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Reports were submitted for the Committees that had met since the last Council meeting.

Resolved: That the reports be received.

10. REPORTS OF THE CHAIRS OF THE REGULATORY COMMITTEES

Written reports were submitted for the Committees that had met since the last Council meeting.

Resolved: That the reports be received.

11. QUESTIONS TO THE MAYOR, CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Councillor Fear asked the Leader the following:

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All Councillors recently received a note from GMB union raising questions about the recent review of the Drugs and Alcohol Policy, which I understand alters the Council's stance on process and threshold of acceptance of alcohol level whilst at work. Can the Leader give assurances as to the process followed and the purpose/intended impact of the change?

The Leader stated that this Policy had recently been up for review and the Council worked with the Unions. The former Policy had been unclear as to levels which the revised Policy made clearer. A level of 12 micrograms per 100milligrams of breath was agreed. This was below the legal limit for driving.

Councillor Fear asked the Leader to outline the jobs involved. The Leader stated that the jobs included lifeguards at J2, refuse collectors, drivers, mechanics and operators of machinery.

[Watch the debate here](#)

12. RECEIPT OF PETITIONS

A petition was handed in by Councillor Fox-Hewitt regarding speed humps within the Bradwell Ward.

As this was a County Matter, the Petition would be passed to Councillor Graham Hutton to be raised with the County Council.

Resolved: That the Petition be received.

[Watch the debate here](#)

13. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

14. DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

Resolved:- That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration if the following matter because it is likely that there will be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs contained within Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

**Mayor - Councillor Kenneth Owen
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 10.26 pm